

Amendments to the Drawings

Applicants submit a complete set of replacement drawings (6 sheets, informal) for FIGS. 1 -6.

FIG. 1 has been amended to show rigid and flexible plate segments that are described in ¶ [0023] of the specification.

FIG. 2 has been amended to show the claimed compressible padding feature.

FIG. 6 has been amended to show the claimed hooks and fasteners feature.

FIGS. 3-5 remain unchanged.

No new matter is added.

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action.

Claims 1-5 and 7-23 were pending. Claims 13-23 have not been examined as they are drawn to a non-elected invention. Claims 1-5 and 7-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Maddox U.S. patent No. 1,340,630 ("Maddox").

The Drawings have been objected to as not showing every feature of the claimed invention.

Interview Summary

Claim 1, and proposed claims 24 and 25, were discussed on October 10, 2007 by Examiners Brandon Jackson and Patricia Bianco with the undersigned with reference to the cited prior art. The discussion is summarized by the Examiner in an Interview Summary dated October 16, 2007.

Applicant's Reply

Applicant appreciates the kind courtesies extended to the undersigned by the Examiners during the interview on October 10, 2007. The Examiner's Interview Summary summarizes the interview accurately.

Drawings

Applicants submit a complete set of replacement drawings (6 sheets, informal) for FIGS. 1 -6. FIGS. 2 and 6 have been amended to show the compressible padding, and hook & fastener features recited in claims 5 and 9, respectively. (FIG. 4. shows the “support mechanism” now recited in amended dependent claim 1).

FIG. 1 has been amended to show rigid and flexible plate segments that are described in ¶ [0023] of the specification. The specification ¶[0023] has been amended to include numeral identifiers 190 and 192 used in FIG. 1 for the rigid and flexible plate segments, respectively, and to provide proper antecedent basis for the claim terms. No new matter is added.

New Claims 24 and 25.

Applicant presents new claims 24 and 25 for examination. No new matter is added. (See specification, ¶[0023] and FIG. 1.).

In applicant’s inventive apparatus, according to claim 24 , the first and second plates are “flat when the apparatus is not in use.” However, in use “the first and second plates remain rigid in their lengthwise direction while in their width-wise directions the plates are molded into a semi-cylindrical or concave shape that is adapted to engage the curved portion of a body part.” This property of the first and second plates, according to claim 25, comes about because “the plates are formed of alternating rigid and flexible plate segments that provide rigidity in the lengthwise directions of the plates and flexibility in the width-wise directions of the plates.”

Applicant submits that the limitations of claims 24 and 25 are not shown by the prior art (including by Maddox).. Accordingly, claims 24 and 25 are patentable.

Claims 1-5 and 7-12

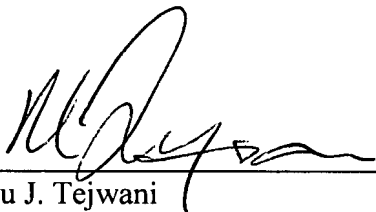
Applicant has amended claims 1-5 and 7-12 for clarity, and so that they now depend from allowable claim 24. These dependent claims are patentable over Maddox for at least the same reasons as parent claim 24.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of which are requested. If there are any remaining issues to be resolved, the applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,

By:



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